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THE HISTORY

OF A

CHURCH

AND A

WARMING-PAN,

WRITTEN FOR THE
BENEFIT OF THE ASSOCIATORS & REFORMERS
OF THE AGE.

AND DEDICATED,
WITHOUT PERMISSION, TO THEIR TRI-FOLD MAJESTIES,
THE PEOPLE, THE LAW, AND THE KING.

BY JAMES MONTGOMERY.

PRINTED IN 1793.

say," exclaimed the Parson, with an oath that would have stag-
an elephant, but which came with ineffable grace from the mouth
divine, " the Church is in DANGER, and nothing but the WARMING
can save it !"

Thus ! poor Church, when all had made their ends of thee, was it not
time for thee to make an end of thyself ?"

PRINTED, ANNO 1849, FOR
OTLEY, SOUTH-STREET, SHEFFIELD-MOOR.

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PRINTED, ANNO 1849, FOR
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PUBLISHER'S ADVERTISEMENTS.

The increasing desire manifested for the attainment of Political knowledge, has induced the Publisher of this Edition of "The History of a Church and a Warming Pan," to bring it again before the Public.

No work that has hitherto appeared, on this subject, so powerfully deniates the origin and progress of corruption, as they are depicted, in the proceedings of this Empire in miniature, (viz: a Parish Government; and if one objection could be raised by wise and thinking men, against the necessity of Universal Suffrage, it is here counteracted by an able illustration of the monstrous abuses, to which the productive classes are subjected; in being compelled to submit to laws, over the formation of which they have no control, in being obligated to throw two thirds of their earnings into the 'Pan,' without ever receiving any return. The publisher considers the merit of the work, will be a sufficient apology for its republication, and he also takes this opportunity of observing, that he is actuated by no other motive than that of serving himself and the public generally, in thus dragging, from comparative obscurity, this discarded although clever specimen of the genius of the talented author which, if allowed to sink into oblivion, would be an eternal disgrace to the supporters of British Literature.

DEDICATION.

TO THEIR MULTITUDINOUS MAJESTY, THE PEOPLE.

DREAD SOVEREIGN !

What a Monster art thou ? The Beast with seven heads and ten horns, on which the fate of unborn empires rode, was a grasshopper, and the Pagan Hydra itself a cricket, compared to thee who art but one Monarch, with eight million heads ; though, for the credit of thy ribs, I hope but few are graced with horns. If thou art blessed with brains in due proportion, what worlds of wisdom must be treasured up, secured with gates of brass and bars of iron, in the boundless magazines of so many pericraniums ; especially when we consider what an economist your Majesty is of that valuable commodity. So great indeed is your parsimony, that some grumblers have not scrupled to say that instead of being the master of uncommon hoards of knowledge, your Majesty has not even five grains of common sense ; otherwise you would not submit to become the dancing bear for every State mountebank to lead about by the nose, as St. Dunstan did His Infernal Majesty, with a pair of red-hot tongs—The Majesty of the People ! Heavens what a sound.

The ocean is but a congregation of drops ; the universe a system of atoms ; and the Majesty of the People, a body of individuals. To those individuals I address myself. You are clamorous for a reform. Every one cries out against his neighbour above him. The structure of the State totters : the foundation roars against the walls, the walls against the roof, the roof against the chimneys, and the chimneys against the clouds. As I am by profession a constitution doctor, and have felt your Majesty's pulse, I will inform your Majesty no further respecting your disorder, than that you will be forced, ere long, to take a fellowship amongst the philosophers of Bethlehem College, unless your Majesty condescends to cure yourself, according to a prescription which has cost your humble servant at least one thousand headaches to bring to perfection ; but which, out of pure patriotism, I here lay at your Majesty's feet. And what can this wonderful panacea be ? Nothing, an't please your Majesty, but—a heavy sweat : which I would advise to be taken in manner following :—Let every member of your most illustrious body, from him who wears the crown to the beggar who cannot afford a hat, provide himself with a besom, mop, and a bucket of water, and with his own hauds let him scour his chambers, his garrets, his cellars, and his passages, and sweep all the filth from before his door. And what Reform can be more effectual ?

I am,

ONE OF YOUR MAJESTY'S ROYAL LIMBS.

TO HIS MOST VOLUMINOUS MAJESTY, THE LAW.

Tremendous Potentate !

Whilst a Bastile is your palace, and a Gibbet your sceptre, I shall scrupulously obey your commands ; and fully sensible of the immense distance between us (so great indeed that I cannot even understand you when you thunder) I shall, with becoming reverence, keep as much out of your reach as I can. But yet I think it my duty to tell your Majesty, in downright English, that I am quite out of love with the enormous antiquated wig which envelopes your Gorgonian Phiz, and gives your most Christian Majesty such an heathenish look ; almost like old Jupiter peeping through a convention of thunder clouds ; or to use a modern simile, your visage, surrounded with monstrous curls, seems a molehill fortified with an hundred ramparts, each mounted with an hundred cannons !—For Heaven's sake, throw away your wig, which, to use an Hibernian phrase, would make an excellent feather bed for your Majesty to repose on at night : and none but tardy snails carry their beds on their backs by day. I will not say that your Majesty ever indulges yourself in a sly nap under its awful umbrage, and snores profound to the wrangling of lawyers, whilst they pick the pockets of your subjects.

Methinks you would lose nothing of your personal dignity—no offence to the dignity of your wardrobe—if your Majesty would appear in a plain Quaker suit of homespun English broad cloth, without any lace or foppery ; your own manly locks waving on your ample shoulder, a staff in your hand, and your sword by your side ! In such a dress, how would your Majesty be adored ! Men can only obey from two principles, Fear and Love. Fear makes men as honest as they cannot help. Love makes them as honest as they can be !

I am, your Majesty's to command, &c.

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

SIR !—May your Majesty be the greatest Monarch, and your subjects the greatest people in the universe ; and long ere you descend to your forefathers, may your Majesty see restored to all your children, their birthright—equal Privileges and equal Laws.

I am, your Majesty's Liege Subject.

THE HISTORY OF A CHURCH AND A WARMING-PAN.

CHAP. 1.

The Church in Danger—Vision of the Sexton's Wife. The Village alarmed—A terrible Ghost.

THE Parish Church in a certain village in South Britain, almost worn to a skeleton in a long and hard service of seven hundred years, bending beneath a load of infirmities, daily threatened to lay down its aged carcâse in the yard, where it had seen so many generations of its children quietly laid by, like broken china in a corner cupboard. This venerable Ecclesiastic, now in its dotage, was still harassed with all the drudgery of Sunday, the same as when in the days of yore, in the spring of youth, the gilded spire glittered like a real sceptre in the sun, and the giddy weathercock spun round its pinnacle, like the crown upon the light head of a brainless despot: when the bells chimed merrily in the steeple, as if they had been bribed like a corrupt parliament, to tinkle in unison in the holy service of Church and King; when the gay painted windows glittered with all the flaunting colours of the rainbow; the pulpit most superbly dressed, like a beau on a birth night, in crimson and gold lace; and the bible itself, in splendid morocco, was more admired for its surface than its contents: the proud walls were hung with emblazoned arms, trophies, patriarchs, crucifixes, texts, and charitable names. How

often have the vaulted roofs rung with the screams of fiddles, the groans of basses, the sighings of flutes, and the shrieks of hautboys; mingling, like fire and water, in hideous concert, with voices of men, women, and children, assembled for as many different purposes as there were persons. The wanton youths came to see and to court; the sly maidens to be seen and courted; the hoary sinner went to pray, because he could sin no longer; thither the married folks repaired, to enjoy the rest they wanted at home, and snored and nodded at each other with extreme devotion; their children attended them to laugh at the parson and mimic the clerk. "There is a time for all things," saith Solomon: I could almost swear he was at Divine service when he made the sage observation.

Such was the state. How changed! Empires have fallen, and so must Church-steeples!

The trembling tower sighed like a willow, rocked, and dropped a stone for a tear, at the rude gust of every ruffian blast; the crawling ivy concealed its nakedness with its leaves; the owls and bats, and clamorous jackdaws, screamed and hooted in the bellchamber, whose former tenants had long been silenced, save one poor piece of battered iron, whose rueful din never failed to suggest to the hearers the happy idea of a tinker mending a brass kettle, the pinnacle and weathercock had long been prostrated, and lay a prey to devouring rust, when the charitable blacksmith, like the good Samaritan, passing by one dark night, had compassion upon them, and laid them upon his shoulders, carried them home, adopted them as his own, and converted them into horse shoes! The leathern buckets which used to hang aloft, vanished one by one, and not a soul in the parish knew which road they took, except the shoe maker, and he, good man! had his reasons for not divulging the secret. The gorgeous trumpery of the pulpit eloped one sabbath, after evening service, and the worthy parson was never sober for two months afterwards! The windows went by piece meal, and the glazier, who was formerly poor and despised, grew suddenly rich and respected! The plumber was a bankrupt in spring; some friend, nobody knows who, set him upon his

legs again in summer; in autum, he made the fine spouts, pumps, and cisterns for the squire's new hall, which set him on horseback; but it was not till winter, that all the saints and sinners in the parish were almost buried in a sudden fall of snow, during divine service, owing to the want of lead which formerly covered the roof!

Alas, poor Church! when all had made their ends of thee, was it not high time for thee to make an end of thyself? The worms had almost entirely consumed thine intestines, the tapestry of spiders darkened thy windows, every stone mouldered away, and the crazy roof hung wishfully over the floor, as if impatient to lay its broken bones to rest:

Such was the deplorable state of the Church, before the parishioners were alarmed either for it, or for themselves, and not a soul ever thought of its tumbling over their heads, except the Sexton's wife, who, during a total eclipse of the moon, positively contrived to dream that the tottering steeple buried her loving husband in a heap of ruins, as he was digging a grave, and merrily whistling, according to custom, the tune of "Poor Tom Bowling." She awoke in a terrible sweat and fright, and seizing her husband by the nose (whom, to her utter astonishment she found alive, and snoring like a bagpipe beside her) she roused him not in the gentlest manner, and communicated her vision to him; but having other business to attend, he only opened his eyes, shut them again, yawned, and turning round—after damning her for disturbing him fell—to snoring louder and more boisterous than before; for which his pious rib, in agonies for his safety, wished him a thousand times at the devil.

No sooner had Dame Morning opened the window shutters of the east, than up sprang the Sexton's wife, and grasping some of her clothes, she ran into the street, huddling them on as she went full speed to old Gammer Grumble's, her neighbour and gossip. Having knocked her up with a vengeance, she instantly disgorged the whole contents of her load into the face of the old beldame, who, with eyes, mouth, and ears thrown

wide open, swallowed the news with the stomach of one of his Majesty's beef-eaters, no offence to that respectable corporation.

To make the shortest and perhaps the best of a very long story, the vision of the Sexton's wife galloped from mouth to ear all around the parish, and before breakfast tables had done smoking, every tongue was running after, and every head aching for the interpretation. The eyes of every body were opened; all wondered that they had never made the discovery before that the Church could not possibly survive another century, nay, some even ventured to say, another week. Ravens were heard to croak portentous from the steeple, groans issued from the tombs, the old bell mourned perpetually, lights were seen flashing in the windows at midnight, every time the clock struck, it seemed to sound the knell of the departing Church, ghosts and spectres had the impudence to stride about the yard, and were sometimes seen by those who had wit enough to fancy so, dancing by dozens on the grave-stones.

But that which confirmed the approaching dissolution of the old Church beyond a doubt, was the hobgoblin tale of honest Farmer Bull, who said, nay swore an oath, which, if false, would have damned a world, that returning home from market one evening, on the middle of the moor, who the d——l should he meet?—Reader, hold your senses fast by the ears lest you should be frightened out of them—the spirit of the old Church taking a nocturnal airing, as, according to village tradition, departing souls are wont, before they finally quit their respective bodies! It met him, like the north wind, full in the teeth, and if he had not with his wonted politeness, given it the road, would in all probability have blasted him. As it passed him, a deep, dismal groan, like the rumbling of an empty stomach, issued from the porch, (for the spirit was exactly shaped like the Church its body,) and then sunk into the earth with a noise, blaze, and smoke, tremendous as the discharge of a train of artillery. Had Farmer Bull been sober, nobody would have given a farthing's worth of credit to his story—for he was known to be the greatest liar in the land; but as he happened, much to his own credit, to be so excessively drunk that he was forced

to take up his night's lodgings in the bottom of a ditch, and leave his horse to graze at large upon the moor; on account of that very circumstance, all the country were confirmed in the truth of the apparition; for it is a proverb in that corner of the universe, that drunkards never lie. One might be led to imagine, that certain British Ministers, in a late instance, profited by Bull's example, when they reeled dead drunk into the Senate of the nation!

CHAP. II.

Interview between the Parson and the Clerk—The Warming Pan—The Association at Goody Thompson's, the Crown and Anchor Inn—And other mighty Events.

When Little John, the Clerk of the Parish, heard Farmer Bull's story, he immediately ran with the ghost in his mouth to the Parson, as a jackal does with a kid to his master the lion, who wallows at ease in his den, devours the carcase, and leaves his servant the bones. The Parson who was a person of no common dimensions, for he would have made half a dozen as good fellows as Little John, was at that very moment holding close converse with the spirit of a brandy bottle, which stood very respectfully, like a dumb waiter at his elbow on a little round table, whilst he supinely lolled, like a crocodile on the banks of the Nile, upon a sofa, smoking his pipe, in his night-gown, cap, and slippers, though past four o'clock in the afternoon.

When the Clerk entered, his holiness pulled off his cap, and welcomed him with the most hideous yawn, which John returned with compound interest, for he yawned no less than seven times, so great was the sympathy of souls between the Parson and his dog. When John had adjusted his little black bob wig, stroked his dapper face, and planted himself erect as a gibbet, upon a chair opposite the parson, without any further

ceremony, he produced a new edition of the Ghost, enriched with his own notes, critical, historical, and explanatory. The parson paid more attention to John's delivery, than ever he did to his own from the pulpit, keeping his bloodshot eyes, swimming in liquor like pickled onions, continually fixed upon the clerk, till he had finished his narration ; then, raising himself, like a leviathan from the flood, he quaffed a goblet of virgin brandy, which had never known water, and filling another, he thus began :—"John," said the parson, " I'll tell you what—but here's 'your health,' first, John."

"Aye, what's that?" cried John, shewing his ivory teeth,

" John," replied the divine, " nodding significantly, " the Church is in danger—Zounds, it's the best brandy I ever drank—here's t'you—the Warming-pan, John—the Warming-pan !—By G...the brandy as hot as fire and brimstone, and that's the goodness on't, John—but, John, the Church ~~is~~ in danger—the Warming-pan !—your health, John : believe me, a glass of this brandy would do you more good than twenty of my best sermons." But he forgot to give John a glass.

" I say," resumed the parson, " the Church is in danger, and nothing but the Warming-pan can save it."

These words, confirmed by an oath that would have staggered an elephant, but which came with ineffable grace from the mouth of a divine, were perfectly understood by John ; who notwithstanding could not help looking up to see whether the ceiling was not falling upon their heads.

" Humph !" said John, screwing his little visage into a thousand wrinkles of disappointment, for he had set his soul upon a glass of the parson's brandy—" Humph," said John, rising precipitately, " when would your worship please to have it done ?" " Next Sunday," said the parson, throwing his eyes out of the window into the Church yard. John rose, bowed, and retiring, betook himself to scouring the Warming-pan, leaving the parson to the philosophical consolations of his bottle and pipe.

Next Sunday, the country poured forth its inhabitants, as the Nile did frogs in the days of Moses and Pharoah, who came in droves to the Church, which had hitherto been as thinly attended as the Devil could wish, whilst no danger appeared ; but now there was some chance of its tumbling upon their heads, so great was their infatuation of curiosity, that all put in for their share of the fun.

After prayers, before the sermon began, John the clerk, with all the powers of the tongue and nose united, informed the congregation, " as how the Church was in danger"—the people stared—" of tumbling over their heads"—the people looked up—" therefore, after mature deliberation"—the people yawned with expectation—" he and his reverence the parson, with the advice of the 'squire and the lawyer"—the parson twanged his nose like a hunter's horn, and the people pricked their ears like hares alarmed—" had thought proper" the people thought, " What the deuce can this mean ?—" " to make a collection !" Expectation, like a bird shot flying, dropped plumb to the ground, and the eyes and countenance of every individual fell to the center of gravity,

The clerk continued—" All charitable and well disposed Christians"—the people looked one upon another, as much as to say, where the devil will you find a Christian amongst us ?—" are requested to contribute liberally."

The people, that moment, beheld the sexton enter with a copper Warming-pan.

Confusion passed, like a fiery meteor over every face ; all hands ran into their pockets, like rabbits into their burrows : and bustle, bustle, scampered round the Church. The House of God, like the temple of Jerusalem, was filled with money-changers, whilst the grave sexton solemnly carried the Warming-pan from seat to seat ; and as few had provided themselves with half-pence against so sudden an emergency, those who had come from afar were forced to surrender their shillings and six-pences, with which they had intended to pay for a comfortable

dinner, and a merry tankard in the evening. The Warming-pan paid no respect to persons, but presented itself to rich and poor, old and young ; even where a family of eight or ten persons sat together, the Warming-pan politely waited upon each : the babe that slumbered on its mothers' bosom was roused by the sexton's walking stick—the smiling innocent awoke—the sexton frowned as black as a thunder cloud—the infant cried, and hid its little face in the mothers' cloak ; but still the Warming-pan refused to depart till a piece of coin was conveyed through the hand of the babe into its rapacious maw. Blush, brazen-faced Oppression ! Blush, and say, " Is taxation no tyranny ? " When the ceremony was concluded, the clerk gave notice, that a collection would be made once every month for the same christian purpose—repairing the Church.

And was the Church repaired ?

No ; but the constitution of the parson, 'squire, clerk, their ministers and sycophants, were very much *impaired* by converting the money received, not into stones and mortar, but into rum, brandy, geneva, &c. &c. which they drank by wholesale, as long as a farthing of the collection remained, at their meetings held at Goody Thompson's, the Crown and Anchor Inn, where they formed themselves into an Association, ostensibly for carrying into effect the repairs of the Church, but in reality for the pious purpose of gormandizing, drinking, smoking, and playing at battle-door and shuttlecock with the good names and characters of their betters, the POOR, whom they robbed—the WRETCHED, whom they starved. Hear, ye Associators against Republicans and Levellers, hear, and take this home to your own bosoms !

At the expiration of the month, the Warming-pan again visited the seats, and again the parishioners made wry faces, and parted with their pence as cheerfully as lap-dogs resign their dinners to bloodhounds. The clerk then gave notice that the collection would in future be made once a fortnight, in order that the charity might go on as swimmingly as possible ; and so it did, for the Parson, 'Squire, and Co. swam all the

money down the same channel as the former, before the middle of the week.

Next Sunday, the clerk issued out a third proclamation complaining most bitterly of the wickedness of the times, and the decay of piety ; but above all, threatening the most terrible vengeance, Fire, Brimstone, and Damnation everlasting, against sabbath-breakers and drunkards ; of whom, as he very truly observed, there were ten times more since the collections had begun, than ever he had known in the parish before : adding, moreover, that to encourage them to attend divine service more eagerly, the collection in future should be made once a week !

The people looked blank, and went murmuring home.

Thus the Warming-pan most religiously attended the forenoon service for about two months, when the clerk again reared his graceless front, and gave "notice, that as the Church was in the most eminent danger, therefore, for the security and ease of their own consciences (purses he meant, but statesmen are in the habit of speaking in hieroglyphics) the collection would be made twice every Sunday, in the fore and afternoon ! !"

The congregation muttered, and great was the confusion of tongues, aye, and faces to ; but the tide, though it swelled high, presumed not as yet to burst beyond the mound of passive obedience—for the people were awed by the presence of the 'squire, whose tenants—rather whose slaves—they were.

Nine months did the parish groan under the tyranny of the Warming-pan ; and all the money collected was honestly invested in the same sinking fund as formerly ; nay, so devoutly did the Warming-pan attend divine service twice every Sunday, that, as Farmer Bull humorously observed, the Warming-pan was " the best Church going Christian in the parish !"

CHAP. III.

An unexpected Stroke, followed by an Event equally unexpected.

Again John, the clerk, in a suit of new clothes and powdered bob (the reward of his eminent services) rose, in the midst of the

congregation, and putting on the very best face he had, amongst a thousand which he could wear at pleasure, according to the persons he was addressing, issued out a fifth general proclamation, and, opening the loudest stop of his stentorian lungs, in a voice melodious as the rattling of a wheelbarrow over an uneven pavement, declared, "that the unavoidable and heavy expenses attending the collections and meetings of the Association, had not only swallowed all the former contributions, but that the said Association, zealous and eager to push forward so great and pious a work with all possible expedition, had reluctantly been forced, at various times, to set up scores at the Crown and Anchor, till, he was sorry to say, the fund was forty nine pounds, nineteen shillings and elevenpence three farthings in debt, besides an extraordinary pipe which the Parson's elbow had broke as he was carried out rather intoxicated one evening, and the said pipe having been valued by a sworn appraiser (one of the Association, consequently an honest man,) at one farthing, made the debt exactly fifty pounds! He therefore hoped, that all pious Christians would, on the present occasion, open their hands and purses, and deal out liberally as faithful stewards!"

Had the last loud trumpet which shall annihilate the universe, burst in peals of redoubled thunder over their heads, not more unexpected—not more unwelcome would have been the alarm! Fifty pounds in debt! (a small sum indeed compared with two hundred and fifty millions!) Let us repeat it. Fifty pounds in debt! and not a pebble purchased towards the reparation of the Church, though three fourths of the families in the parish had been starving on short allowance for the last twelvemonths, to filch from their lean earnings the weekly tax of the Warming-pan!!!

When the Clerk held his peace, the parson rose in the pulpit, with all the consequence of Beelzebub in the parliament of Pandemonium, and began to storm, bluster and thunder forth anathemas against all who dared to question the honesty of the Association: for he said, and he said truly, though as yet not a dog had dared to move his tongue, "he read an impeach-

ment in their blackguard countenances; then, after roaring and sweating, fuming, raging, and cursing for a full hour, he concluded in the language of a highwayman, by threatening every soul present with eternal damnation, if they did not immediately produce their purses and deliver! The 'Squire, the lord of the land, took snuff, frowned, and brandished his cane to enforce obedience, for he saw the tempest gathering from afar. The Sexton entered with the Warming-pan, and the people began to fumble in their pockets.

A boding silence reigned, like the dead calm preceding the tremendous tornado; and the Warming-pan journeyed unmoled through the south aisle, till the Sexton, turning the corner, clapped his pan, as a robber does his pistol, to the breast of Tom Crabtree, the stay maker, who sat in gloomy silence gnawing his nether lip, and rolling his eyes with dumb vexation: Tom nodded suddenly at the Sexton—the Sexton pushed the pan furiously against Tom's ribs,—when, with one indignant stroke of his foot, he kicked the pan out of the Sexton's hand, and the money flew from one end of the Church to the other. The enraged Sexton levelled a blow with his staff at the temples of Crabtree, which he did not mean to repeat; but the latter, with the knotted limb of an oak, dealt such a thunder-bolt on the proud citadel of the Sexton's face, that he ran howling into the vestry, with both his hands covering the hideous ruins of what once had been a very substantial nose—Tom rose composedly from his seat, and the whole congregation with him, clapping their hands, throwing up their hats, and crying, "Well done Tom."

Crabtree, elated with success, pulled off both his shoes, one of which he discharged with all his might at the Parson, who received it at the enormous expense of the only two grinders which fortified his dreadful jaws; the other shoe saluted the staring eyes of the Squire so warmly, that they wept a shower of tears and blood at the unexpected meeting.—Down came the Parson, bellowing like a wounded Mars, from the pulpit, and took refuge with the Clerk and Sexton in the vestry, whither they were followed by the blinded 'Squire and his

family, the Lawyer, the two Apothecaries, the Constables, Schoolmaster, &c. The mob, with Crabtree at their head, followed close at their heels ; but when the aristocracy were all closeted, Crabtree shut the door, and rearing his brawny shoulders against it to prevent either ingress or egress, with a philip of his thumb and finger, he reduced the mob to silence.

Then, throwing himself into an attitude worthy of Demosthenes himself, in act to address the roaring billows of the agitated ocean, he cleared his throat with about half a dozen loud hems, and raised his ponderous arm—Hold!—before you hear what he has to say for himself, look him fairly in the face ; for to give honest Tom his due, he was a most sublime rhetorical figure, his head a monstrous hyperbole, his nose a pointed trope, the precipice of his chin a headlong anticlimax, and the cavern of his jaws a den of paradoxes. The logic of his arms was irresistible ; round they whirled like windmill-sails, and a single argument from one of his fists would have knocked down Aristotle, or an ox, as flat as a grave-stone ; nor were the powers of his legs less capable of crushing a stout antagonist under his feet : his red hot eyes were at least as piercing as a dagger which on a recent occasion threw the whole Senate of Britain into the most distorting convulsions !—Don't be frightened, it was only a laughing matter. The potent bellows of his lungs abundantly supplied the twin organs of his nose and tongue, with gusts of wind which dealt out his thunderclaps of oratory, in explosions resembling the rough, guttural language, in which cannons and mortars harangue besieged towns, and like those tremendous strains of eloquence, his delivery was full of fire—and smoke too.

“Folk,” said the orator, with one hand pulling up his breeches, and threshing the air most unmercifully with the other, “there is an old proverb not a pin worse for wear which says,

‘When Adam dived and Eve span,
Pray who was then the gentleman?’

“Adam, you all know, was no gentleman, for he earned his bread, as every honest body should do, with the sweat of

brow ; and as for old Grandmother Eve she was never a gentleman in her born days, though I am positive she wore the breeches—no—breeches were not invented in those times, but she had the mastership of her silly husband, and we married folks know by experience that is the same thing. No matter a cursed Beldame, if it had not been for that and her greedy guts, we should never had all this hurly-burly about repairing a rotten Church, or have seen all our good, hard-earned money, squandered away at an alehouse, by an execrable gang of associated rascals, who, because they are not poor and honest, must needs be rich and villainous ; and call themselves gentlemen, forsooth of all names in the dictionary ! I'll tell you what—for aught I know, the scripture says the Devil was a gentleman from the beginning : it either says that or something else—the parson perhaps could tell us : No, I am mistaken ; the parson knows less of scripture than my dog Jowler. Jowler drives my sheep, he worries none ; but this thief of a parson, not content even with the fleece of his flock, by G—d for this twelvemonth past, has been feeding upon the carcasses of you all. Yes, my friends, you are nothing but skin and bones—as for the parson he's nothing but flesh and blood—he has not a bone in his body, nor a grain of honesty in his heart. But I am running on at a strange rate—I shall come round presently. I have lately read a book, no matter what the title is ; but it says, what do you think it says ? I'll hold a dozen of ale that not a soul present, who has not read the book, can tell me what it says. In good sadness, my friends, it says—perhaps not in the same words, but the sense is unchangeable—it says, in short, We're all as equal as a box of dice, as a shilling is to twelpence, or as my right eye is to my left. And I believe, as firmly as I believe in my creed, that King George the third in the bottom of his heart, is—an arrant man ! What makes a King ? A coat daubed with gold, which would be better employed in guineas—a crown, a sceptre, and such like playthings—these make a King ; these are Majesty ! Yes, and all the majesty which half the monarchs on whom the sun has shone could boast of. What makes a begger ? Faith, nothing but the want of these things which make a king ; poverty, rags, and want—these make a beggar !

"But not to keep you gaping here any longer, though I could preach till this time twelvemonth. D'ye see, we've got a whole room full of villians as black as e'er dangled in halters. Now, I'll tell you how to proceed with them—for fun we will have for our money, which they have wasted in guzzling and drinking, and cramming their ungodly guts. As for the 'Squire, we'll bring his pride a story or two lower; supposing, my lads, we shave his head, draw his teeth, and kick his backside into half-crown pieces. Then the Parson, that tun of wickedness! egad, we'll tar and feather him; and should old Nick have the good luck to meet him, I'm sure he would scamper back to his dungeon as fast as he could, to put his dominions in a posture of defence against so horrid a rival. The Lawyer, we'll toss him in a blanket—a blanket, a blanket for the lawyer; he'll cut glorious capers! As for the Quack doctor, the Clerk, Sexton and the rest of the gang, the cold bath will be of service to them, and they shall have it with a witness! Last of all my lads, what think you if we blow up the old Church with Gunpowder—the finest fun in the world! After that, we'll all run mad, like brave fellows. Heigho! let us begin."

The mob instantly set up a shout, which made the crazy Church reel, and were going to proceed to immediate action, when a most respectable person, whose name, though I dare not mention it, the four winds shall waft triumphant round every quarter of the globe, broke through the ranks of the populace; and, mounting the altar the majesty of his appearance awed the multitude to silence.

CHAP. IV.

The Speech of somebody—and History of the Church and and Warming-pan makes its exit in a very extraordinary manner.

The person last mentioned, with a graceful wave of his hand, began:—

“Countrymen, and my worthy Fellows ! For Heaven’s sake pause one moment, and look before you leap. We are all brethren—we are all equals. Fortune has made some difference between man and man, but the devil has made a great deal more. To prove this, look into the vestry ; were ever such monsters dragged to the light before ? Most justly do they deserve the punishment to which honest Crabtree has sentenced them—but remember, they are men. The full meaning of this word was never understood before the present day ; ages upon ages have swept away generations after generations from the face of the globe, without being able to find out this grand secret, which despots and tyrants have made it their interest to conceal ; it was left for the eighteenth century to make the mighty discovery, that all the human race are MEN ! Hitherto, a river a chain of mountains, an arm of the sea, and in ten thousand instances a stone wall or a quickset edge dividing one tract of land into two parts called countries, have been thought sufficient incentives to make the inhabitants barbarians, savages, murderers to one another !

“Too long hath War—War, the blackest fiend that ever rose from the bottomless pit—ravaged the globe, and desolated the nations. Every page of History is written with human blood. Where is the field that hath not been the scene of battle, murder and death ? Where is the plain, however, extensive, which hath not been one grave ? Are not the mountains swelled to double their height with human clay ? Where is the river whose course hath not been choaked with bodies—whose streams hath not rolled purple to the sea, and dyed the very ocean with man’s blood, shed by men’s hands ? Name the town, the city, the village, which at one period or other hath not been reduced to ashes—whose smoke hath not eclipsed the sun at noon—whose flames have not illuminated the brows of midnight—whose inhabitants have never been plundered, ravished, massacred !

“WAR IS BUT GIGANTIC MURDER ! The grim Idol adorned by tyrants and their titled slaves. The globe is his altar—man his victim ; his mouth is famine, his breath

Pestilence, his look Death, and his footsteps Graves ? Even now, his exterminating arm is hewing down, without distinction, the tallest and fairest cedars in Europe, as fuel for his sacrifices ; and the British Oak itself, groaning to the redoubling strokes of his axe, nods hourly o'er a broader and blacker shadow, prophetic of—save, save, my country, heaven—a fall !

“Hitherto, a gorgeous robe, a golden toy, a bloody sword, or sounding nickname, like magic charms, have rendered both sacred and terrible the persons of wretches, on whose frown the fate—on whose smile the life—of nations, trembled in agonizing suspense ! Wretches, whose importance was only equalled by their arrogance !

“Man, now awakening from the slumber of six thousand years, opens his eyes. Ye powers ! was it ever known before that Man could see ? Man rises upon his feet ; more, he walks ! Was it ever conceived that Man's legs were given for any other purpose than to support a load of fetters ? The thunder rolls—Man starts and listens ; good Heavens ! we all knew Man had ears, but who would have believed that he could hear ? A lion, with eyes of blood and fire, rushes upon Man ; he grasps the monster by the shaggy mane, and rends him like a kid ! Who ever heard that man had strength ? He had arms, we knew ; but were they not made to drudge and wear the chains of tyrants ? No ! the cheat is now found out, and the bold imposture, no longer able to defend his fort by fraud, draws forth his dagger to defend it : Tyranny struggles hard, like Cæsar in the Senate-house—in vain, for fall it must ; though, like Cæsar, with many wounds. And not only in kingdoms and empires shall it fall, but in villages too—and this brings me home.

“Squires and gentlemen (so called) have ruled in their petty domains, with a tyranny as despotic, in many instances, as monarchs in their more exalted stations ; and parsons, my good friends, have played the same deep game in parishes, as popes, cardinals, and bishops in their more extended circles ; the fleece, not the flock, has been their care. The event of this day has opened the eyes of all present, and discovered

such a scene of unheard-of-iniquity as deluded honesty could scarcely have conceived to exist. I will only offer a few observations upon the present business, and then leave it to your own good sense to make what terms you please with your prisoners ; for I would advise you to desist, by all means, from offering any violence to their persons : you cannot punish them more severely, than by forcing them to refund your plundered money, to lower their excessive rents, and oblige the parson to be content with a salary in the room of tythes.

“But, to trouble you only a few minutes longer ; this Church, like a certain Constitution, in its present ruinous condition, must inevitably tumble over your heads, unless speedily and completely repaired, though perhaps a new Church—I dare not say a new Constitution—might be more desirable. Wicked and designing men, like treacherous ministers and hollow statesmen, under pretence of repairing, have long drained your purses and starved your tables, to glut their lusts at your expense. The committee appointed to manage the parish business have betrayed their trust ; the great villains elected themselves first, and then filled up the number with their own sycophants. Would to God there was not another assembly in Britain to which I could but must forbear to liken them ! Notwithstanding what has passed, the Church must be repaired, and the Constitution of our country regenerated. But how must these great ends be accomplished ? By an equal representation of the people in Parliament, and of this village in a committee ; a parliament composed of the best and wisest men in these realms—a committee of the most honest and upright men in this village ; and these can only be chosen properly, by collecting the votes of every individual, whose head can boast of common sense, his heart of common honesty.

“Enormous grievances cry aloud for redress, both in the state, and in this village ; taxes are intolerably burdensome.—God said Let there be light, and there was light : but ministers have stepped in between the Creator and his creatures ; they have monopolised the light of Heaven, and sell it, by retail, as a grocer sells TEA. Of whom did they buy it ? If they they have not bought it, they have stolen it. Nothing is sacred

to rapacious wretches, when they have got, no matter how, a little brief authority. They say the light of Heaven is ours ; ours is the air ye breathe, and we may take both away when we please ; ours is the blood that warms your hearts, and we may make a hole and spill it ; ours are the brains in your heads, and ours are the noses on your faces, and we may blow out the one and cut off the other, for our pastime.'

" 'And why may ye do all these mighty things ?'

" 'Because we can, and because we can, we will.'

"Blasphemous presumption ! Where sleeps the avenging thunder ? Where has the lightning lost its shafts ? The thunder, the thunder awakes ! Tremble, and sink into annihilation, ye pyramids of despotism ! See the arrows of lightning—they fly, and blasted tyrants bite the ground ! Oppression reels, and slavery sinks beneath the dreadful stroke. But whither am I hurried ? My friends, assert your rights ; your rents are intolerable ; and tithes—oh the tyranny of tithes—this moment offers relief ; your oppressors, your enemies, are in your hands ; make your own terms, but let those terms be honourable. and forget not sacred property ; act with prudence and justice, but act with spirit. They have been your tyrants, but remember—they are your brethren."

He ceased and instantaneously departed.

Every body is acquainted with that wonderful engine a mouse trap ; a species of guillotine, by which those little republican scoundrels are for ever cured of their levelling principles. But as many persons may have no notion of an elephant trap, take the following account. This grand monarch of the forest, for political reasons, never lies down to sleep, but reposes against the hospitable trunk of some gigantic tree, which for ages has mocked the fury of the tempestuous elements. The hunters contrive to saw the tree just so far through the trunk that it may stand erect. At his bedtime comes the elephant, and leans as usual his stupendous side against it. The tree, false friend, gives way, and his brutal majesty is hurled with a vengeance upon his back. Unable to rise, bellows out amain ; the forest trembles—but the hunters laugh !

So and just so, fell that awful son of Anak, Thomas Crabtree ; who the moment Mr. Somebody held his peace, bounced backwards in order to take a glorious spring leap upon the altar, to put the question upon his own original motion, when the faithless vestry door, which bore him a grudge for several terrible shocks he had given it, during his philippic, and unused to such actions of assault and battery, suddenly broke from its hinges, and down tumbled Tom upon his rear, with a roar and a crash, like the fall of a wooden windmill ; or rather as if the old Church itself had thunderd down in ruins about his ears. The people rushed in regardless of the dreadful outcries of Crabtree, whom they almost trampled to death in their confusion, when to their sorrow, they found that the arch rogues, their prisoners, had once more completely duped them—by making a door of the window !!!

J. M. G.

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